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ABSTRACT

Over 70 years ago, female leaders in organized camping, the only form of outdoor experiential education then available, shaped the meaning of professionalism and controlled organizational structures and policies. Their achievement is paradigmatic of women's professional struggles in the outdoor pursuits professions in this century. This book chapter shows how camping women acted to define the first institutional expression of what we term experiential education today. The originality of their achievement lay in uniting educational theory with a conception of associational democracy that assured them parity with men. Gender equality was to be virtually definitive of the field. The lessons they offer are still relevant to experiential educators, particularly women, since the barriers they faced have not been overcome and perennial dilemmas in professional self-definition remain urgent. Beginning in 1916 in the National Association of Directors of Girls Camps, and later in the Camp Directors Association, women came to view their work through two contradictory screens. First, they borrowed the gender-based logic of their male prep-school colleagues to craft a heroic reading of "the director"; and second, as association founders and members, they deployed this romantic image of the woman leader in service of their status in "professional" organizations. Their professional self-definition was rooted in both a communitarian feminist pedagogy and a vision of rigorous professional standards. Contains 38 references. (Author/SV)

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The History of Camping Women in the Professionalization of Experiential Education

Wilma Miranda and Rita Yerkes

Origins in Organized Camping

In the late 1970s, experiential educators were taken by surprise by a groundswell of interest in women-only outdoor pursuits programs. This demand has swelled unabated throughout the 1980s to the present (Yerkes & Miranda, 1982; Mitten, 1992).

The program responses to women's interests have generated an accompanying expansion of feminist-based theory in experiential education. With the growth of a broad range of programs to choose from, women from diverse backgrounds have built female community across cultural and racial differences. Leadership philosophy itself is grounded in women's experience, skills, and needs (Warren, 1985; Mitten, 1986; Pfirman, 1988; Roberts, 1993).

Not since the rise of the girls' camping movement at the beginning of this century has an autonomous women's movement so directly impacted outdoor programs and professional discourse. Indeed, we should understand the present wave not as something new, but rather, as a resurgence of neglected feminist traditions in experiential education. When a new breed of women leaders began in the 1980s to rethink their profession along feminist lines, their claims exceeded the usual demands for employment equity and participant access. What made them appear transgressive to some was their willingness to reconstruct definitions of outdoor pursuits leadership in light of the principles of feminist pedagogy (Mitten, 1985; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1987). They used the normative concepts in experiential education to interrogate assumptions in the field. Whose experience was really addressed? Whose left out? Critiques showed how gender blindness in service to a universalist notion of experience unwittingly masked the tailoring of "experience" to fit men's experience (Bialeschki, 1992).

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Fifty years and historical amnesia separate us from the earliest campaign in the 1920s to achieve professional autonomy by and for women. Female leaders in organized camping, the only form of outdoor experiential education then available, shaped the very meaning of professionalism and for over seven years, held organizational structures and policies in their control. We take their achievement to be paradigmatic of women's professional struggles in the outdoor pursuits professions in this century.

This case study shows how camping women acted to define the first institutional expression of what we term experiential education today. The originality of their achievement lay in uniting educational theory with a conception of associational democracy that assured them parity with men. Gender equality was to be virtually definitive of the field. The lessons they offer are still relevant to all experiential educators, women in particular, since the barriers they faced have yet to be overcome, and perennial dilemmas in professional self-definition remain urgent. To recover the story of their attainments and limitations, therefore, serves to clarify our own.

We shall show how first in the National Association of Directors of Girls Camps, and later in the Camp Directors Association, women came to view their work through two contradictory interpretive screens. First, they borrowed the gender-based logic of their male prep-school colleagues to craft a heroic reading of "the director"; and second, as association founders and members, they deployed this romantic image of the woman leader in service of their status in *professional* organization. Their professional self-definition was rooted in both a communitarian feminist pedagogy and a vision of rigorous professional standards (Brown, 1913).

Reconstructing the Education of Girls

It all started with only eight women who, in the fall of 1916, met to plan what would soon be known as The National Association of Directors of Girls Camps (NADGC) (Eells, 1986, p. 163). The meeting included such luminaries as Mrs. Luther Gulick, co-founder with her husband of The Campfire Girls, and her sister, Mrs. Charles Farnsworth, headmistress of the Horace Mann School for Girls at Teachers College, Columbia University, whose husband was also on the faculty there. Mary Schenck Woolman, founder of the Manhattan Training School for Girls and once professor of Household Arts at Columbia, and Florence Marshall, director and head of the Manhattan Trade School for Girls, were pioneers in the development of home economics education. Though Dr. Susan Kingsbury, director of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston could not attend, it was she who had issued the invitations.

These women represented an elite coalition of academic and philanthropic interests in women's progressive education. The overriding belief they held in common was that a new American golden age depended on the liberation of girls. In other words, it depended on them. The problem was not what to do, but where to do it!

The impressive popularity of the organized camping movement seemed to offer a way. Camp sessions could be short and flexible, the required investment was modest, and the outdoors was an idyllic setting to counter traditional homes and schools.

One of the attendees, Laura Mattoon, had earned her fame as owner/director of Kehonka, a showpiece girls' camp in New Hampshire. Porter Sargent, a key promoter of private school camping, had identified Mattoon as among the "pioneers in everything pertaining to the progress of the summer camp" (Sargent, 1924, p. 263). Yet, at the age of 43, neither she nor any of the other 200 women then directing camps were eligible to join the Camp Directors Association of America, founded in 1910 (Eells, 1986). The story of women's power in the NADGC and later in the merged Camp Directors Association; was also Mattoon's story. Long before 1916, she had become an honored pioneer, but she was not yet deemed a colleague.

The men who began camping for boys in the 1890s had been seeking not progress, but restoration. Deploring the "effeminizing" drift of modern life (Miranda, 1985), they blamed the decadent city and hothouse "indoors" prep schools. To counter these threats to American virility, they launched a movement toward rugged outdoor education (Hamilton, 1930, p. 69). With Thoreauvian defiance, they constructed communal Walden Ponds to serve as masculine incubators against the twin evils of temptation and coddling. Never much interested in professionalizing this new work, they crafted a romantic image of the director as mentor—an educational adventurer capable of inspiring a community of "real" men and boys (Hamilton, 1930, p. 4). The "chief" was cast as an outdoorsman of breeding, character, and style. By definition, this was a male role (Balch, 1893, p. 251). There is irony in the fact that it would be for this vision of educational community, this lost cause of 20th-century American education, that Mattoon and her feminist allies would work so fervently for over twenty years.

The public infatuation with camps had turned them into the first stable leadership training bases for girls. Freed from the domesticating influences of home, camps became centers for envisioning new lives. Yet camping education itself needed reform, if the work was to advance. Women directors modeled shared leadership in contrast to "control from the top," a feature in boys' camping they deplored. Girls would learn "cooperative government in which campers have a very real part. . . . We are teaching attitudes of mind more than anything else" (Mattoon, 1923, p. 21). Women directors were to be the charismatic models of the *new* woman.

Their first target was outdated attitudes toward physical activity. As a close colleague of Mattoon put it: "The camps reveal . . . a deplorable lack in the present system of education for women. It is the failure to put the proper emphasis on physical development" (Coale, 1919, p. 16).

Though these new educational executives (as they called themselves) modeled feminine independence which tested class and gender-appropriate mores of the times, they stopped short of open repudiation (Miranda, 1987). However, they directly challenged the intrusions of industrialism on what today we call woman-

space: "Just as in industry women have been working under conditions designed for men, so it would seem, in the school and college, a man's program is being imposed upon the girl student" (Coale, 1919, p. 263).

Directors of girls' camps, therefore, needed a strong professional association which could serve as a counterweight against such imposition. By 1920, a coalition of girls' camp directors had established to their own satisfaction a fact largely doubted by their contemporaries. "The girls' camp has proved that there can be just as great esprit de corps among girls as among boys" (Coale, 1919, p. 263). Only a strong professional association would provide the needed leverage to support these embryonic communities.

The National Association of Directors of Girls Camps

By 1910, camps were at the heart of the incipient recreation professions, as potential employers of newly trained camp personnel. The men in organized camping were aware that this expansion of camping would bring problems of control. Alarmingly, some parents even pressed for co-educational scouting (Buckler, 1961, p. 29). The "ladies," of course, were very welcome to start their own girls' camps along with an organization of camp directresses. The men understood, of course, that these camps would be less rigorous imitations of the real thing, and that their activities, while educationally virtuous, had no bearing on the business of the Camp Directors Association of America (CDAA).

Since the stakes over the control of camping were rising, male leaders eagerly counterproposed a separate girls' organization, agreeing that girls had special needs and should be preparing for different adult roles (Gulick, 1912). After 1910, leading men took keen interest in the formation of carefully defined "opportunities" for girls. Luther Gulick himself led the way. But other prominent men, such as Daniel West, head of the Boy Scouts, also insisted on separate arrangements—both for girls' camping *and* for a separate organization of girls' camp directors (Gulick, 1912). The purpose of Camp Fire Girls, as outlined by Gulick, was to glamorize female domestic duties. Women would be trained to find adventure at home in service to the industrial age built by men. Not the wildfire but the hearthfire was to be the symbolic source of outdoor romance for girls (Gulick, 1912, p. 325).

Few women were independent owners of boys' camps, while men often owned girls' camps directed by their spouses. A separate organization admitting both men and women would assure that the CDAA could avoid female membership and, through the men who joined both associations, retain influence in the direction of the largely women's association. They hadn't reckoned on the influence of those at the 1916 planning session, who were not so compliant with this agenda as were their own spouses. Laura Mattoon, Florence Marshall, and Susan Kingsbury resisted not only the simplistically domestic agenda of Camp Fire programming, but the idea of a subordinate professional association as well. Marshall was soon to resign from her

role in the Camp Fire Association after charges were brought against Gulick for fiscal malfeasance (*New York Times*, 13 March, 1915, p. 9). Kingsbury, an economy professor at Vassar, had established her camp explicitly as an experiment in socialist principles (McMullen to Eells, 8/31/76).

The National Association of Directors of Girls Camps was by definition an association of directors of both genders. For the first time, married women, along with singles, would hold independent association membership in their own right in an association that included both genders. Though the old guard in the CDAA no doubt expected men to shape the fledgling association, younger males really functioned as conduits, carrying the NADGC agenda back into the deliberations of the CDAA. L. B. Sharp, Director of Life Camps, and William Gould Vinal, President of the CDAA at the time of the merger in 1924, pushed for the progressivism that literally defined the NADGC. Its priorities, in fact, were identical with the goals of educational progressivism—program certification, safety standards, program development, training, and the expansion of camping opportunities for middle- and lower-class youngsters (Lehman, 1925).

Enter the Kingmaker

As the NADGC's first secretary, Laura Mattoon played the pivotal role in protecting the interests of the large cadre of women directors. Her wealth helped. By subsidizing its activities, she was able to chart the direction of the new association. Born in 1873 in Springfield, Massachusetts, to a socialite opera singer and a financier, Mattoon used her inherited wealth and her connections to establish an associational structure that would ensure a voice for women. She had graduated from Wellesley College in 1894 with a degree in the natural sciences. There she had been inspired by the lingering spell of Alice Freeman Palmer, the young and brilliant former president of Wellesley. Palmer's educational vision for women would inspire Mattoon's own throughout her long and amazing career. Of Palmer, she later wrote in a book of camp devotions, "We love the mind courageous which no dread of failure ever daunted, whose control of gentleness all opposition stole" (Mattoon & Bragdon, 1947, p. 133). For almost fifteen years, Mattoon was to ply this art of gentleness with consummate skill before its severe political shortcomings were to be revealed. Yet Palmer showed Mattoon's generation of young educated women how to be daring and also perfectly ladylike. "O Leader of Leaders," Mattoon wrote, "Thy life was set, to counsel—to be a friend" (Mattoon & Bragdon, p. 133). This was the stirring image of moral leadership she took to the forums of the NADGC, exhorting others to follow the old Wellesley dictum—"Not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

Mattoon was out to educate the new woman in new ways. Her intentions at Kehonka were always explicit:

> Among the many things we are trying to do in camps is to develop a keen and solid sense of responsibility toward the new voting citizenship that now

> has become a part of a woman's life. Energy, time, and thought have been put into the long fight for the right to vote. Much has been won for America's girls. (Mattoon, 1925, p. 11)

Though friendly to the Camp Fire leaders and sympathetic toward programs in the household arts, her main goal was to challenge old boundaries set for girls. For reasons different from the men, she lay great stress upon the rigors of the "primitive camp." While men were trying to recapture the ideals of the past for boys, Mattoon aimed to overcome them for girls (McMullen to Eells, 1976).

The basic pedagogical responsibility for the education of girls opposed the one set out by Gulick (Brown, 1913, p. 30). Mattoon and others expected their campers to sleep in tents, take backcountry hikes, and learn the skills detailed in campcraft as developed by Ernest Thompson Seton and the Woodcraft League (Coale, 1918, p. 263). In an era, particularly after World War I, when most progressives were arguing for coeducation, these progressive educators remained staunchly committed to a separate female education. Even more important than "roughing it" were the aesthetic and spiritual links between a robust girlhood and nature. A distinctly female aesthetic along the Palmer model was promoted: "Artistic expression comes naturally and spontaneously in the solitude and beauty of the woods. . . . A leader has only to foster and nourish it" (Eells, 1978).

A professional association of such leaders, however essential, would not be sufficient. A democratic organization congruent with their feminist commitments would be required. Eleanor Eells comments (interview, 1978) that "the women stuck it out. In amazing fashion [they] made it a full-time profession . . . very much in response to social issues." Dr. Anna Brown, head of the Young Women's Christian Association, held that ". . . the duty of democratizing intercourse lies chiefly at the door of women in our country." For her, outdoor play was "the most democratizing single influence we can exert upon the artificial social standards of our time" (1913, p. 30).

Given the domination of men in numbers, prestige, and wealth, it would be difficult at best to establish equal participation in professional association with them. Yet, in spite of their commitment to a separate female education, this is precisely what the women set out to accomplish. A women-only association would only replicate the gender relations they hoped to reverse. Only in a professional association where they wielded equal power with men, could they provide themselves the base to influence norms beyond the association itself.

Pedagogy and professional association democracy, therefore, were of one piece. The constitution of the National Association of Directors of Girls Camps reflected the values of the well-run camp community. It became a professional model for gender inclusivity. Under Mattoon's leadership, the NADGC comprised a remarkable group of men and women directors who briefly achieved congruence between their educational ideology and their organizational structure. Within a few years of its official beginning in 1916, the young association would attract some of educational

progressivism's biggest stars. Like the older, exclusively male CDAA, it remained in the hands of private camp directors, but in this case, those hands were female.

Secretary Mattoon nurtured an effective alliance against a perceived common enemy—"quickbuck operators," busily degrading the professional standards of true camping:

> The secretary notes that among the newer camps there is a growing tendency toward modern commercial procedure in publicity... the ethics and dignity of our educational profession are ignored.... Even I who have been conducting a camp for twenty-six seasons, have been included in these purchased lists as a desirable "miss" of camping age. (Mattoon, 1928, p. 18)

Mattoon's influence owed much to her great skill in balancing interests. Prominent men did not dominate the association, but she could ill-afford to alienate them or their spouses. Never seeking the limelight for herself, she saw to it that the ambition of others was served. She was never president. It was her unchallenged incumbency in the secretary's position that assured her a continuous seat on the executive committee whose meetings she held at her own camp. She maintained a surprisingly resilient coalition of interests between progressive school camp directors, independent camp women, large agency directors and administrators, and a growing number of teacher education faculty. More than money and personal finesse were at work here. Mattoon knew how to deploy constitutional and parliamentary regulations against any challenges to her own agendas (Gibson, 1936, p. 23). Since the constitution stipulated that the presidency and vice-presidency must be alternated annually between a man and a woman, and since she herself was returned annually as executive secretary, at least *two* women would always be on the executive committee (Lehman, 1925, p. 133). Usually, there were more.

From this position, Mattoon worked unremittingly on behalf of her primary long-term goal—amalgamation with the CDAA. Merger negotiations were kept entirely covert for two years to prevent conflicts from breaking into an open hostility that would dash her hopes (Eells, 1986). Why amalgamation? Because only in a unified association could camp directors compete as equals with other educational leaders. Further, if women were to retain the same power after merger that they had already achieved in the NADGC, their advance would range far beyond the camping movement itself.

Only the Name is the Same

"As Eve was created from one of Adam's ribs, so, in this case, the girl's camp organization is but a highly developed rib from the masculine parent" (Eells, 1986, p. 42). So intoned William Gould Vinal at the great March 1924 Meeting of the National Association of Directors of Girls Camps and the Camp Directors Association of America. This perhaps intentionally patronizing remark may have been said

to soothe the pride of the men of the CDAA, honoring male chivalry in allowing "the ladies" to join them. The truth, as Vinal well knew, was directly to the contrary. The terms of the merger were a NADGC diplomatic triumph, imposing gender equality and progressive policies on the field as a whole. It had proudly stood for "all that was best" in scientific education, standardization of health and safety practices, and expanded curricula (Gibson, 1936, p. 25). "It was at this historic meeting that 'A Statement of Basic Standards for Organized Summer Camps as prepared by the New England Section of the NADGC,' was presented by Mrs. Dwight Rogers, and adopted" (Gibson, 1936, p. 23). The NADGC had redefined camping education:

> The word "camp" shall be construed to mean an educational and recreational organization occupying ample grounds in the country, in which systematic instruction is given primarily in the branches of outdoor activities, nature lore, and handicraft, by trained counselors to an organized group of young people, for a period of not less than seven weeks. (Lehman, 1925, p. 133)

As the men of the old CDAA knew, the NADGC had not been the child of the wilderness but of the city, born in New York where not only Teachers College but also the burgeoning private agencies in camping had their headquarters—the Girl Scouts, the YWCA, the settlement houses. By the twenties, Teachers College had become the center of post-World War I educational progressivism. It provided graduate degrees for personnel not only in education, but in new social service and recreational fields. Young people attended in huge numbers, seeking legitimation for new professions, including organized camping, the playground movement, and YMCA programs. To the horror of some New England directors, camping had been recaptured by the city, bringing standardization, hierarchy, and conformity in the name of progress (Wack, 1923, p. 42).

The NADGC had owed its rapid rise to this concentration of new education and recreation interests. As Teachers College drew increasing numbers of graduate students seeking advanced degrees, the NADGC drew prestigious faculty support, including John Dewey's disciple, William Heard Kilpatrick. He claimed the camp to be the quintessential form of progressive and experiential education:

> I want the camp to set an example to the school that brings education in, instead of setting it up so that it is hard to get an education at all . . . so that when people watch the camp they would come back to the school teachers and say "Now look here, we have had enough of your kind of education." (Kilpatrick, 1933, p. 20)

Young protégés of Kilpatrick, among them E. K. Fretwell and L. B. Sharp, who were soon to become important leaders in camping and, later, in what came to be known as outdoor education, derived much of their own influence in the NADGC from their faculty positions at Teachers College-Columbia. Though supported by

Mattoon, the coalition came at a price for the women. Feminist progressives retained their alliance with conservative, private-camp men against a headlong rush to management expertise. They held out for the autonomous model of charismatic leader so indispensable to their own professional identities (Mattoon, 1925, p. 11). Interestingly, feminist directors and the conservative chiefs of private boys' camps found themselves allied and on the defensive against urban voices calling for managerial reform.

The consolidation in 1924 masked these tensions under the rhetoric that the interests of all camp directors were the same. To many curmudgeons of New England, however, the amalgamation was a bad show led by owners of the "Vest-Chesty Biltmore Hotels in the woods" (Wack, 1923, p. 42). This corruption they blamed on Teachers College and the hordes of women, their own colleagues at last, who had grown strong in the NADGC. They knew a merger would promote the influence of the agencies at the expense of the individual private camp. Yet by 1924, most outdoor educators, like all educators, were loathe to be thought *un*progressive. In an era when universities, recreational agencies, and private camps all were competing to shape the definitions and norms of the "progressive" outdoor professions, camping was key; it would not do to retreat from the fray.

Mattoon's balancing act became unsustainable in spite of her continued support from both independent and agency camp constituencies. She exhorted camps to "guard like a jewel" their own individuality since the independent camp must remain the cornerstone of the profession (Mattoon, 1925, p. 13). Social service and teacher education interests should nonetheless be welcomed, she warned the old guard, since they were powerful promoters of the true camping idea. As her position was equivocal, so, too, were her marching orders to the new organization:

> They included a housecleaning among our present members to bring us up to the same standards we demand of our new camps; [and] . . . the need of a centrally located headquarters with a permanent full time executive secretary. (Gibson, 1936, p. 23)

Temporarily, at least, she was in control. As executive secretary *and* treasurer, she presided over annual business meetings while continuing the monthly executive committee meetings at her own camp—just as she had for the NADGC. She would continue to underwrite the costs of association initiatives. From 1924 until her resignation in 1931, she stayed in office as others rotated on and off the executive committee. Though she had a firm hand on the tiller, trouble churned below.

Reversal

Evidence of tension and her response appear early—in her 1925 convention report, where the laconic statement appears that, "The plan which existed in the

NADGC of having its members grouped in different sections has been continued in the new organization" (Mattoon, 1925, p. 11).

This was a key issue. The association was a federation of sections where each section was equally represented on the executive committee, irrespective of their membership numbers. Since an individual's primary membership was in the section rather than in the national association, this assured a large measure of sectional influence. The arrangement particularly suited the interests of the New England section which, with its small membership compared to that of New York, had a voice at the national level disproportionate to its actual size. It also assured the general preeminence of private camps and, therefore, the relative power of the independent camp women.

With Mattoon subtly guiding most association matters, and the protections provided by a sectional confederation, neither agency progressives nor conservative interests could marginalize the independent camp women. A centralized hierarchical organization, however, with primary membership in the national association, would wipe out this sectional advantage.

A second bone of contention was the criteria for membership. On this question turned the whole definition of the profession. From the private camp perspective, the Camp Directors Association ought clearly to be an association of camp directors:

> Active membership shall be open to any man or woman who shall have directed an organized and approved camp for boys or girls or for both boys and girls, during a period of at least two consecutive seasons, and who shall be conducting such a camp at the time of election. (Lehman, 1925, p. 133)

Feminist independents held out against their powerful progressive allies, by holding tenaciously to both the federation concept and restrictive membership criteria. Between 1924 and 1930, Mattoon, "The Godmother of Organized Camping," warded off a barrage of constitutional challenges, playing off interests so as to put a brake on moves either to dominate or to secede. As the only assured member of the executive committee for over six years, she learned how to ride out the storms. Her gender, reputation, and class status ensured deference from members of her own class and even from the ambitious young New York members seeking to define the profession in less elitist terms. Women directors supported her not only because she was an admired director herself, but also because she held the line against encroachments on their position. In a typical tribute, her supporters expressed the "love and appreciation of the directors":

> Miss Mattoon has served the association since its organization and much of the success of the CDA is due to her unselfish and sacrificial devotion to the organization. (Atlantic City Annual Meeting, 1929)

She had become their Alice Freeman Palmer. Yet the balance struck between the ambitious partisans of New York agencies and their New England resisters could not last. The fulcrum coalition of feminist women began to disintegrate. Girls' camp leaders who were positioned between conservatives and progressives became themselves fragmented after 1929 as the Depression hit new independent camps especially hard. As many dropped out of the association, independent camp leaders became more defensive in organizational skirmishes.

By 1930, the executive secretary's legendary patience was wearing thin. Her annual reports became sermonettes on the proper conduct of camping education and the association's business. "The secretary notes . . ." was the typical introduction to a literate scolding. Her frustration mounted. The old tactics were failing. No longer could she play off relatively equal forces in the organization. The New York section chafed under the indignity of having full membership denied to some of its most influential members. Prestigious faculty might write the books on professional standards, but if they didn't run a camp, they were barred from full voting membership. This situation could not last.

Mattoon's influence after 1929 eroded so rapidly that critics openly sniped at her retreat into a "cabal," a secret controlling group (Hamilton, 1931, p. 11). In spite of hard times, the association had outgrown its dependence on her financial support. Universities and philanthropic agencies became increasingly important sources of funding. From Mattoon's perspective, more substantive setbacks had taken their toll. The educational rhetoric upon which organized camping had grounded its professional claims failed to convince most of its own members. Behind Mattoon's merger agenda had been the hope to create an association of directors whose voice would count in larger educational forums. She complained that the Camp Directors Association was "missing" from the Child Study Association, the Progressive Education Association, and the National Educational Association. "We should seek direct understandings and contacts with educational organizations" (Mattoon, 1929, p. 12). On this, the conservatives prevailed. For them, the whole point of camp had been to escape the school, not to become one. For their part, teacher education experts had little specific interest in the private-school-based independent camp of either the old CDAA men or the progressive feminists. They would maintain their ties with agencies, public schools, and teacher education. In 1929, Mattoon gave it one more try:

> We begin to wonder whether we have given enough thought about the idea of each section having an office that would meet the requirements of local conditions. There is lacking a definite and comprehensive, and progressive plan. . . .
>
> Why not, then, before we leave this convention consider the appointment of a commission "truly" representative of the association and camping movement? Each section might be permitted to appoint representatives . . . in proportion with section membership. (Mattoon, 1929, p. 12)

This is vintage Mattoon. She hoped this plan to funnel resources to the local sections would forestall constitutional attacks. Unfortunately, the call for true representation begged the question of the criteria for membership. As things stood, New England members, mostly heads of private camps, as well as the independent camp directors in New York, favored the status quo. Certainly, the private girls' camps directors would benefit by retaining the federation concept and the criteria for membership. Agency staff women, however, decreasingly looked to the independents to speak for their interests. Coeducational, municipal, or state park personnel had no roots in girls' camping and few now defined themselves as educators. Their professional identity owed little to the older tradition of the camp director. Less restrictive membership criteria and changes in organizational structure met their concrete needs (Lehman, 1930, p. 23). For a new generation of women, neither gender, nor feminist pedagogy, nor sectional autonomy was a compelling issue. The coalition had finally broken down.

When in 1931, Mattoon finally retired from her role, it marked the end of a struggle toward one form of associational democracy. A constitution assuring collegial relationships among equal proprietors holding membership in a confederation of independent sections was rejected by former progressive allies. Teacher education professionals, social service personnel, support personnel in camps, and those in outdoor recreation agencies clamored for "an association of all camps and camp groups recognizing each other as members of the same function" (Final Report of the Committee of Seven, 1932).

In 1932, a commission along lines suggested by Mattoon presented its blunt report. Active voting membership would henceforth be open to all persons interested in educational/recreational camping. A strong national organization was *the* priority. Sections should be fostered but never at the expense of the national (Final Report of the Committee of Seven, 1932). This became the organizational model for an again-renamed American Camping Association, established in 1932, and remains so to the present.

Conclusion

By the late twenties, the romantic conception of the camp director lost ground to the expert manager:

> The genial delusion that a camp is good for a child in proportion to the moral or ethical characteristics of the director still persists. As well persuade a municipality to hire an engineer to build a bridge because he is a pillar of the church and pays his graces. Camping becomes more highly technical every year. (Solomon, 1931, p. 3)

New bureaucratic professionals, many of them women, understandably pressed for an end to membership restrictions. Yet there is irony here. University programs

in management, safety standards, or tests and measurement were now the centers of legitimation for otherwise diffusing fields in outdoor recreation/education. Women flocked to classes preparing them for new job opportunities, but as students, employees, and professional association members, their activities were subsumed under hierarchical organizations. Though their numbers grew exponentially, they found themselves again at the margins of power.

Women directors had implemented a model of outdoor experience designed to nurture female independence in community. The necessary associational form to support their aspirations amounted to a structured gender parallelism, one that provided a bulwark against masculine privilege. Theirs was not an errand in futility. Female leadership in the NADGC made possible a form of association democracy through which women's aims helped to establish norms constitutive of outdoor professionalism.

In 1926, Laura Mattoon delivered a paper to the Camp Directors Association, entitled, "The Need of Professional Leadership in Camps." In it, she successfully urged those assembled to pass a motion agreeing to begin an assessment of camp programs in cooperation with representatives of the Child Study Association. Nothing concrete would come of this. But its aim was clear—professionalism was to be developed from the ground up, its standards upheld by those closest to the work, and regulated within professional associations. Not external experts, but directors as educators in community were to legitimate the profession.

The rise of feminist-based women's adventure programs in the 1980s represents a new attempt to link feminist educational thought to activist social ends. This time, the programs were addressed to adult women rather than to younger girls. Nonhierarchical networks were formed between voluntary associations, university faculty, and independent private businesses. Understandably, this ferment originated, though it did not remain, outside the professional associations. By 1986, strong women's professional subgroups were established within recreation and outdoor experiential education organizations. The relative importance of sectional membership was again debated. In the Association for Experiential Education, for example, this took place in a political context friendlier to confederation principles—moving centers of control from centralized organizations to more powerful independent sections. Women outdoor pursuits leaders from disparate professional constituencies, including outdoor educators, wilderness trippers, social workers, scouting leaders, and professors, came together to redefine the work they held in common across diffuse professional boundaries. Once again, the substantive and strategic issues inherent in establishing professional visibility are being faced.

The 1990s are witness to the breakdown of bureaucratic systems. To guide the future, it will be important to grasp that more than one version of professionalism and professional association was for a time viable and successful. A deeper reading of the conditions and constraints under which women in the experiential professions strove to define themselves and their work provides a historical basis for

understanding the challenges and dilemmas today. Many detailed studies are required before a full and undistorted history of women in the varieties of experiential education can be written. Included must be analyses of women's roles in physical education, the national recreation association movement, and Outward Bound. Until detailed stories like this one are added to the professional literature base, all experiential education professionals will lack a sure grasp of their own diverse and fruitful foundations.

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